

# Video art workshop is moving to Riverow

By RUSSELL LEE KAHN

OWEGO — The Experimental Television Center, whose productions have been seen nationally, is moving from downtown Binghamton to Riverow in downtown Owego.

Ralph Hocking, an instructor in the film department at the State University of New York at Binghamton, has run the center for 10 years at 164 Court St., Binghamton, but said this morning that he expects to begin moving into two floors on Riverow by Tuesday.

The center will be operating in Owego by August or September, Hocking said.

Hocking, whose house in Weltonville north of the Village of Owego is also his own studio, said he decided in part to move because it would be closer to his home.

"But it also seemed more interesting, visually, to bring the center to a country setting. It's a better visual setup near the (Susquehanna) river," he said.

Although Hocking has enough equipment to make commercial productions, he does not have actors nor does he line up money-making film ventures.

Instead, stressing the video medium as an art form, he provides the equipment

and background to allow community artists to put together their own productions. Although he, full-time administrator Sherry Miller and assistant Teer Bowde help coordinate productions, the work — from shooting to final editing on advanced video synthesizers — is done by the artist.

Hocking, who is working on a video show for the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, said, however, that a five-week course in video production is planned at the Owego center beginning in fall. He said it would allow amateurs to get help in producing their own video shows.

He said that the \$5 a day that the center charges for use of the equipment hardly qualifies the agency as a money-maker.

The full schedule for the coming year, he said, rests largely on the state Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, which provide the major backing for the group.

The state agency provided \$30,000 and the \$15,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30. Hocking is expecting a decision on continued financing for next year some-

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*Ralph Hocking*

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time this month.

"A lot is contingent on that grant," he said.

Some of the productions from the center have been seen on the nationally syndicated Public Broadcasting System and Hocking has had displays at the Everson Museum in Syracuse and the Kitchen Museum, a New York City gallery.

In addition, a proposal is currently in the works that would allow much of the

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work to be broadcast over WSKG-TV, the public broadcasting station in the Triple Cities.

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Most of the move will begin Tuesday. Hocking plans to have a library and administrative center on the second floor of the Riverrow complex with the entire third floor being a studio.

The equipment, much of which has been built or adapted for its use by Hocking and his assistants, include six color and black and white portable cameras, "some very old and some fairly new," he said, and several three-quarter-inch video and some audio recorders.

He also has a computer, which is used to help generate images and control the video and audio.

The recorders are similar to those used in the home to tape television programs. But the commercial types use one-half inch wide tapes, which Hocking

says do not make as good quality recordings. However, cassettes from the wider selling equipment can be adapted to the center's equipment, Hocking said.

Hocking's students have used the videotape facilities in Binghamton, where he has also held an artist-in-residence series. He hopes to continue both in Owego.

He said he often takes his show to schools and universities throughout the Southern Tier.

The Experimental TV Center has tax-free status. Its artists work for about a week on each production, he said.

Hocking would like to see an expanded center in Owego with the first floor devoted to an unusual museum with relics from the early days of television, which he collects as a hobby. The second and third floors would include a much-expanded television center, he said.

But Hocking is not about to begin producing commercial television ventures, which he called boring.

"It's a problem that traditionally drama is mostly coming through the ears and not the eyes," he said. "We have done some work commercially but we don't solicit it. We primarily are trying to develop video as an art form, to emphasize TV as visual art."



Ralph Hocking  
...bringing TV center to Owego